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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SPEECH IN CAIRO, NORTH KOREA

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage June 13-15 on the potential hike in commodities prices; on the legislature's passage of the Act Governing the Development of Renewable Energy; and on President Ma Ying-jeou's running in the election for the KMT chairmanship.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, Taiwan's former Ambassador to South Africa Loh I-cheng commented on United States President Barack Obama's speech at Cairo University in his column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times." Loh said the importance of this speech in which he proffers an olive branch outweighs President Obama's election victory speech or inaugural speech. However, the impact of this speech on the Islamic world remains to be seen. Regarding the North Korean nuclear issue, a column in the "China Times" commented on the United Nations' latest resolution posing sanctions against North Korea. The column said the United Nations' resolution is not going to do much to help denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. An op-ed in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" said that China is losing control of North Korea, because North Korea is beginning to distrust China. The United States should not look to China for a resolution to North Korea's provocative moves. For now, resuming the Six-Party Talks is the only solution. End summary.

¶3. President Obama's Speech in Cairo

"Obama Delivered an Olive Branch"

Taiwan's former Ambassador to South Africa Loh I-cheng wrote in his column at the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 130,000] (6/15):

"While both Taiwan and Hong Kong were commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Protest, United States President Barack Obama visited the capital of Egypt and delivered a speech at Cairo that shook the Islamic World. In the Greco-Roman manner of speaking, he [Obama] delivered an olive branch, which is a symbol expressing goodwill and the pursuit of peace. As far as this point is concerned, the long-term influence and the importance [of this Cairo speech] outweighs his own election victory speech or inaugural speech, which have won universal praise. ...

"When giving the speech Cairo, Obama admitted that 'no single speech can change the world.' In the last two weeks, scholars, politicians, and media in [various] countries continuously discuss how much impact this speech will have on the Islamic world. Different people have different views, and it is difficult to reach one conclusion. Only the history can be the judge. ..."

¶4. North Korea

A) "The Resolution for Sanctions is Strong in Appearance but Weak in Reality"

The "International Outlook" column in the centrist, KMT-leaning

"China Times" [circulation: 130,000] wrote (6/13):

"... After the resolution was passed [in the United Nations June 12], how will North Korea respond? The International community is holding its breath and waiting to see. In fact, if North Korea has made up its mind to possess nuclear [weapons], it basically does not need to respond anymore. [North Korea] can just follow the examples of India, Pakistan, and Israel and immerse itself in hard work quietly. If North Korea really is extorting [something from the international community], as Western observers have been saying, then [North Korea should] just obediently return to the "Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program," and there is no need to respond any more. ..."

"North Korea closes its eyes to the United States, Japan and South Korea. The United States, Japan and South Korea used the [United Nations'] sanctions to punish North Korea in retaliation. The purpose of [the retaliation] should have been met. However, if [various] countries thought that the sanctions would contribute to denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, unfortunately [the sanctions] just work the opposite [manner] from what [these] countries had hoped."

B) "North Korea is China's Nightmare"

Sushil Seth, a writer based in Australia, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (6/14):

"... North Korea's brinkmanship is all the more dangerous now that China seems to be losing control over its communist neighbor. If anything, North Korea is beginning to distrust China. ...
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"Pyongyang came to lean on China for a favorable resolution of negotiations. Instead, it now watches Beijing joining the US and other states in castigating it for its nuclear and missile testing.

...

"But North Korea's reckless and dangerous nuclear politics is making China look increasingly impotent, with the added effect of pushing South Korea further into the US' fold. No wonder China is hopping mad over Pyongyang's nuclear tantrums: It is finding itself increasingly unable to lobby North Korea for fear of creating an even bigger disaster. ..."

"There is method in North Korea's madness, but it is a dangerous method indeed: Knowing that Beijing might huff and puff but won't blow North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's house in. Therefore, if the US is looking to China for an effective resolution to North Korea's provocations, it will be disappointed. The most China can do is reconvene another session of the Six-Nation Talks. But in the present mode of North Korean belligerence, even that seems improbable."

YOUNG